

Tree Country

March 2016



the employee
newsletter of the
**South Carolina
Forestry Commission**

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from the desk of
STATE FORESTER
Gene Kodama

Good day,
In last month's bulletin, I started my section with some comments on the wonderfully warm sunny weather we were having, but by the time most readers received it we were receiving several more inches of rain, and cool temperatures had returned. So, I will start this message by saying that today is beautiful, we are finally getting good weather for outdoor activities like logging and prescribed burning. But, that is as far as I will go with any predictions.

Regarding prescribed burning, I received a call yesterday from a friend in Jasper County who wanted to offer his "compliments to the Forestry Commission." He and his family own forestland and have used Commission services for many years. Yesterday, a Commission team led by Tyler Greiner was on his property prescribed-burning for him. He called to say they were "very nice, cooperative, and motivated" and doing a great job. He also said to be sure we knew the dispatch team at our Walterboro office was also doing

a fantastic job for the agency and its customers. He said he and his family were "very satisfied and happy Forestry Commission customers" and wanted to be sure we knew that. We thank our agency teams in Jasper County and all other locations around the state who serve the public so well and generate such nice comments from those they assist.

Our agency received another significant endorsement in February when we appeared before the Senate Oversight Committee, which conducted



State Forester Gene Kodama was honored with a Senate resolution Feb. 16 congratulating him on winning the Society of American Foresters' Gifford Pinchot Medal. His wife, Karen, accompanied him to the State House.



Assistant Vice President for Hunting Heritage and Director for NWTF Hunting Heritage Centers Scott Vance, Taylor Nursery Supervisor Hamp Holmes, State Forester Gene Kodama, Assistant Nursery Supervisor David Holmes, and NWTF Hunting Heritage and Habitat Specialist Travis Sumner attended the NWTF Landowner Appreciation Dinner Feb. 4 at the NWTF in Edgefield. The SCFC partners with the NWTF on dove and turkey hunts.

a review of the Commission during 2015. The Senate Fish, Game, and Forestry subcommittee that performed the review did an outstanding job, working well with the Commission to ensure that the agency was properly examined and that their review was completed on time with a high-quality report. The results of the review showed just two minor issues that have already been resolved and a favorable approval rating by the subcommittee. In addition, Senator Chip Campsen, the full committee chairman, congratulated our agency on receiving a highly favorable rating from the subcommittee which will now be considered by the full committee. So, once again, thank you to our entire agency and our Commissioners for your diligent and successful efforts to ensure that the Forestry Commission stays focused on its statutory mission of protecting and developing the forest resources of the state and properly serving all the state's citizens.

Last week, I traveled to Washington, D.C. to chair the USDA Forestry Research Advisory Committee. This was my first meeting as the chair, and the meeting went well. We asked several representatives of forestry at the national level to attend and to provide their input into what research was being provided by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and what was needed from their viewpoint. Representatives from the Society of American Foresters, The American Forest and Paper Association, the American Forest Foundation, the American Loggers Council, and the US Forest Service National Forests attended and presented their perspectives. This input will be added to additional information that the committee gathers during the year and a letter sent to the USDA's Secretary as suggested directions for their forestry research programs. As in other professions and businesses, research is critical to continue improving the science

of forestry and providing care and management of the nation's forests and their environmental and economic contributions to the country.

On the legislative front, the House Ways and Means Committee recommended the same budget the governor did: four additional positions, \$200,000 for forestry industry development, and \$1 million for equipment replacement. We present our budget request to the Senate Finance subcommittee March 16 and are hoping for increases to the House recommendations. The renewal of Act 271, Senate Bill 973 and House Bill 4525 to fund firefighting and equipment is still on the Senate calendar for a third reading. We have been providing information on this bill that will hopefully enable its passage. This renewal is needed to continue replacing old equipment and acquiring enclosed-cab bulldozers for the safety of our firefighters and the public and property that the agency protects.



On the Cover

This issue's cover features a beautiful sunset looking inland across the marsh from Folly Beach.

Gene

Employee News

New Employees

We would like to welcome two new employees to the agency.

Cody Quinn is the new Forest Technician in the Abbeville/Greenwood/Laurens sector. Cody started Feb. 2 and will work under Supervisor Dale Curry. He previously worked at the Greenwood County SC Department of Transportation and is also a lieutenant at the Western Laurens Volunteer Fire Department in Ware Shoals. Cody lives in Laurens County and loves to hunt deer and fish, and go to Clemson football games.



Cody Quinn

Jane Leneave is the new Fiscal Analyst II in Accounting. Jane started Feb. 17 and will be over Accounts Receivable. She lives in Blythewood and has an educational background in business management and marketing. Jane was previously a fiscal analyst for the SC Highway Patrol for more than two-and-a-half years.

Jane enjoys spending her spare time with her 17-month-old daughter, Caidence, playing games or walking any opportunity she gets. She also loves to travel and try new restaurants.



Jane Leneave

PERSONNEL NEWS

Dillon/Florence sector Forest Technician **Bob Hepburn** retired Feb. 3 from his position in the Pee Dee Region. Bob had been with the agency since 1987. We wish him the best in retirement.

William "Charlie" Scruggs was reassigned from his position as Trade Specialist IV to Trade Specialist IV, Crew Leader with Manchester State Forest effective Feb. 2.

Harbison Forest Technician **Henry Hutto** was promoted to Project Forester for Darlington, Lee, and Marlboro counties effective March 2.

Derek Fogle is resigning his position as Forestry Technician at Manchester State Forest effective March 4.

GUESS WHO



Do you recognize any one in this photo from 1994-95? These Clemson forestry students are "guarding" the rock at Clemson.

Coastal Urban Forester Frances Waite

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



IT Manager Scott Drafts makes a sad face as he sits in the corner of the Communications Room supervising a computer technician who was installing a security appliance.



Protection Chief Darryl Jones visited the Wildland Firefighter Foundation in Boise, Idaho when in town for a National Wildfire Coordinating Group meeting.



Pee Dee Communications Manager Donald Bryant sent in this photo he took of Draytonville Tower.

SCFC Raises Flood Economic Impact Loss Estimate

The South Carolina Forestry Commission raised its estimate of economic impact loss to the state's forest products industry from last year's historic flooding to \$100 million.

The agency derived its initial impact assessment of \$65 million in October 2015 from forest planting and inventory data, aerial surveillance, mill reports and consultations with foresters, loggers and landowners.

Since then, the commission has surveyed nearly twice as many mills in the roughly 20-county swath most affected by the flood in addition to collecting more extensive feedback and data from landowners and foresters in those areas.

The loss of access to roads, bridges and rail lines, higher operating costs for loggers, increased transportation costs for mills and overall lost productivity account for most of the economic loss. The primary impacts to the forestry sector include:

- lost manufacturing production and increased operating and wood supply costs;
- financial losses to loggers who could not work or who suffered extended downtime;
- damage to both public and private roads and bridges, which detoured or stopped truck traffic; and
- damaged or destroyed young pine stands.

"At the state level, this loss represents a very small part of the industry's \$18.6 billion annual contribution to the state's economy, but the flooding and continuous wet weather have taken a tremendous toll on the mills, loggers and landowners in the impacted areas," said State Forester Gene Kodama. "The event is a reminder of the importance of maintaining a balanced supply of and demand for timber to keep the industry, its jobs and our forests healthy."



WIS-TV reporter Sam Bleiweiss interviewed State Forester Gene Kodama Friday, Feb. 5 in Columbia regarding the agency's appraisal of forestry-related damage from October 2015's historic flooding.

You can view the story on WIS at <http://www.wistv.com/story/31154130/state-forestry-commission-estimates-100-million-impact-loss-from-octobers-flood>.

Information

-Doug Wood



Georgetown/Williamsburg Project Forester Wes Brunson inspects seedlings that were flooded.



Flood waters destroyed this young stand of pines in Williamsburg County.



WLTx reporter Daniel Bonds interviewed State Forester Gene Kodama on the flooding impact Feb. 8

Kodama Honored with Senate Resolution S.1051

The South Carolina Senate passed a resolution Feb. 16 congratulating State Forester Gene Kodama for winning the Society of American Foresters' prestigious Gifford Pinchot Medal and for his work as state forester.

Resolution S. 1051 was introduced and adopted Feb. 2 with sponsors: Senators Campsen, Alexander, Allen, Bennett, Bright, Bryant, Campbell, Cleary, Coleman, Corbin, Courson, Cromer, Davis, Fair, Gregory, Grooms, Hayes, Hembree, Hutto, Jackson, Johnson, Kimpson, Leatherman, Lourie, Malloy, L. Martin, S. Martin, Massey, J. Matthews, M.B. Matthews,



Senators presented a resolution to State Forester Gene Kodama Feb. 16 at the State House congratulating him for winning the SAF Gifford Pinchot Medal. Pictured in the Senate Chamber are Senator Paul Campbell, Senator Larry Grooms, Karen Kodama, State Forester Gene Kodama, Senator Chip Campsen, Senator Ronnie Cromer, Senator Vincent Sheheen, and Senator Katrina Shealy.



Kodama stands in the Senate balcony as he is recognized.

McElveen, Nicholson, Peeler, Rankin, Reese, Sabb, Scott, Setzler, Shealy, Sheheen, Thurmond, Turner, Verdin, Williams and Young.

The members of the Senate are grateful for the dedicated service Mr. Kodama

has given to the South Carolina Forestry Commission and for the positive recognition he has brought to the state through his work.

Remember South Carolina's State Forests at Tax Time

The South Carolina Forestry Commission encourages citizens to make a charitable contribution to the SC State Forests Fund on their tax returns.

Taxpayers have the opportunity to support the five state forests – Harbison, Manchester, Poe Creek, Sand Hills and Wee Tee – by making a check-off contribution on their state tax returns using Form I-330.

South Carolina's state forest system receives no state funding and relies solely on timber receipts, pine straw sales and recreational permit revenue for its operating funds. "We're completely self-supporting, so any money we receive from the check-off program goes directly back into these forests and facilities," said Mike Shealy, SCFC state lands manager.

The State Forests Fund check-off program has raised almost \$80,000 in the five years since its inception, with all of the money used to make improvements and repairs that directly benefit visitors and enhance their experience on state forest lands. Recent enhancements include a new Firewise demonstration area, fishing pier, bike trails and solar panels.

Not only do the state forests support themselves, but they also provide funding to school systems in the counties that host them, giving nearly \$500,000 to school districts in 10 counties last year alone.

How To Give To The SC State Forests Fund:

1. Enter the amount of your donation on Line 28 of your individual income tax form, S.C. Form 1040.
2. Then enter the amount of your donation on Line 15 of S.C. Tax Form I-330, then again on Line 17.
3. Attach S.C. Tax Form I-330 (https://dor.sc.gov/forms-site/Forms/I330_04292013.pdf)



Remember SC's state forests at tax time this year.

STATE FORESTS FUND

Support forest use and recreation with a charitable check-off on your SC tax return by entering your donation on line 28 of Form 1040 and again on line 17 of Form I-330.



Agency Holds Basic Fire School for New Employees

Basic Fire School was held Jan. 25-29 at the SC Criminal Justice Academy. Eighteen new employees attended the week-long training.

The school introduced employees to a number of topics from SCFC history to fire suppression tactics. The group also visited the Piedmont Dispatch Center to learn about the Commission's dispatch system and communications setup. Equipment maintenance and safety, fire cause and origin, map reading, land measurement, smoke management and defensive driving were some other topics covered during the week. The class participated in a field exercise Jan. 28 on Harbison State Forest. Employees used hand tools to construct a fireline in the morning and went through a sand table exercise inside the headquarters in the afternoon. The course ended Friday following an exam.

Deputy State Forester Tom Patton welcomed the fire school participants at the beginning of the week-long class, reminding them that safety is their first priority.

Instructors during the week were Training Director Leslie Woodham, Protection Chief Darryl Jones, Piedmont Regional Forester Mike Bozzo, Piedmont West Unit Forester Michael Weeks, Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt, Technology Division Director Jeff Baumann, Pee Dee Communications Manager Donald Bryant, Equipment Coordinator Doug Mills, Protection Staff Forester Brad Bramlett, Deputy Law Enforcement Chief Jonathan Calore, Edisto Unit Forester Pete Stuckey, Pee Dee Regional Forester Mike Ney, Chief Pilot Sam Anderson, and Coastal Regional Forester Calvin Bailey.



Piedmont West Unit Forester Michael Weeks sets up the scenario for the sand table exercise during Basic Fire School.



New employees take part in the sand table exercise during Basic Fire School.

TREE JOKES

Why can't the lonely evergreen stop thinking about high school?
She's still pining to be one of the poplar kids.

Why do trees hate tests?
Because they get stumped by the questions.



Manchester State Forest Hosts SETRA Motorcycle Races

Manchester State Forest (MSF) recently hosted nationally sanctioned Southeastern Enduro & Trail Riders Association (SETRA) races as a part of Sumter Dirt Bike Week.

MSF personnel and the Sumter Enduro Riders Motorcycle Association (SERMA) worked together for months preparing the trails for the events. Dirt Bike Week kicked off with the 17th Annual Burnt Gin Hare Scramble Jan. 30-31 at the former Creech Greenhouse and Seed Orchard in Wedgefield. The event featured Pee Wee and Mini XC class races both days and culminated with the Burnt Gin Hare Scramble main event Jan. 31.

Gavin Roberts was the overall winner of both Pee Wee races, which were held on a one-mile course, while Zachary Davidson maneuvered the five-mile course to the overall win in both Mini XC races. Grant Baylor claimed first place in the Burnt Gin Hare Scramble main event, racing on an 11-mile course against a field of 254 competitors.

It didn't take Baylor long to hoist another trophy, as he won the 47th Annual Sumter National Enduro Feb. 7, beating a field of 678 racers on a 65-mile course through the forest. Zach Hayes, who is the son of Lynches River Forest Technician Benjie Hayes, finished 17th overall and won the Expert-AA class. The Sumter National Enduro is the first of nine races in the 2016 Kenda AMA National Enduro Championship Series. Four countries – United States, Mexico, Canada and Australia – and 38 states were represented at the race.



Zachary Davidson was the overall winner of the Mini XC.



Gavin Roberts won the Pee Wee division race on Saturday as MSF Technician/LE Steve Ward looks on.



Grayson Elliott (7) and Austin Griffin (303) battle for second place in the Pee Wee division.



Racers and spectators get ready for the second race of the day Jan. 30.



Racers compete in the SuperMini 14-15 race.



Briana May finished third overall in the Mini XC.

What City Foresters Do



from the **TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN**

To some, it sounds like a contradiction of terms, but many foresters do work in cities. Their work may not be as well known as that of their rural colleagues who protect and manage the nation's timber resources. But urban foresters play a vital role in the health and future of some of America's most important forests — the trees along our streets and in our parks and yards. City foresters are the unsung heroes who champion the green features of our country's finest places to live. Citizens in communities of all sizes benefit when the services of a city forester are available.

GOALS OF THE IDEAL URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

Flying the flag of Tree City USA is the symbol of good urban forestry, but that symbol represents a lot of hard work. Here are the goals most city foresters seek to attain for their communities:

AESTHETICS AND ECO-SERVICES Trees make life more pleasant, not only through their beauty and cooling shade, but through the work they do. They are so essential that they can be referred to as part of the city infrastructure. As such, trees reduce storm runoff, clean the air of dust particles and unhealthy gasses, reduce energy demands, contribute to outdoor recreation, and provide numerous other public health benefits. City foresters promote tree planting and care, helping their communities gain these benefits while at the same time raising property values, attracting new businesses, and generally improving the area's economy.

SAFETY Proper selection of species, routine inspection, knowledgeable pruning and maintenance, control of insects and diseases, and the timely removal of dangerous or dead trees are some of the ways city foresters work toward providing public safety and protecting property from falling limbs or trees.

EFFICIENCY With 134 trees per mile lining the streets of an average American city, a systematic approach to tree management is the forester's goal. A well-developed inventory is usually the first step, followed by scheduled maintenance instead of crisis management. The result is longer life of trees and more time and money available for planting and maintenance because less will be needed for removals.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT Public support is essential for the success of an urban forestry program. Therefore, city foresters work with tree advisory boards and other groups, as well as with the media. The result is not only a greater number of property owners doing a better job of tree care, but also the support necessary for adequate funding of a forestry program — and sometimes even a small army of volunteers to help out with special projects.

WHAT A CITY FORESTER CAN DO FOR YOU

- Make sure your tax dollars are spent wisely on quality trees suited for the planting site.
- Serve as a leader for tree-awareness programs and public education about trees.
- Initiate and assist volunteer groups that can work for trees.
- Provide you with valuable, localized information about tree care, reputable tree care companies, and how to comply with tree ordinances.
- Represent the best interests of trees and aesthetics at planning and zoning meetings.
- Train and supervise city crews or contractors so that the best methods of tree care are practiced in your community and the lives of your trees are extended beyond average.
- Champion tree planting and preservation of existing trees when developers propose new projects.
- Work with engineers to protect trees during highway construction or street-widening projects.

A municipal forester is ready for the outbreak of new insect and disease pests. He or she can also prevent accidents and expensive lawsuits by regularly inspecting trees on public property and rights-of-way for potential hazards.



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ...

- ✓ What a community forestry program will entail
- ✓ Examples of exemplary city programs
- ✓ How small communities can get assistance
- ✓ The city forester of the future
- ✓ And much more



Arbor Day Foundation®
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

The above summary is taken from Tree City USA Bulletin #12. More copies of the TC USA bulletins can be ordered from the Arbor Day Foundation at: 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410 or online at: www.arborday.org.

Employee Service Awards

SERVICE AWARDS FOR MARCH

Employee's Name	Position	Location	State Service
Sue Creech	Administrative Assistant	Sand Hills State Forest	10 years
Jeff Riggan	Project Forester	Piedmont East Unit	10 years

Upstate Receives More Snow



Firewise Field Coordinator Bill Wiley sent in these photos of snow at the Lesslie office near Rock Hill Feb. 12.

FUN FACTS

Dogs' sense of smell is about 100,000 times stronger than humans', but they have just one-sixth our number of taste buds.

Owls don't have eyeballs. They have eye tubes.

Butterflies can taste with their feet.

Honeybees can flap their wings 200 times every second.

Mother Nature Network (<http://www.mnn.com>)





Ready For Action, New Enclosed-Cab Units Deployed to Field

Eighteen new enclosed-cab units were distributed to the three regions Feb. 9-10 after an orientation on the equipment from SCFC Equipment Coordinator Doug Mills and Caterpillar Demo Operator Bob Sharpe.

The new firefighting unit consists of a CAT D4K2 dozer, fireplow and a Freightliner transport. The forest technicians drove their new units home following the orientation and were available for response.



Dillon/Florence sector Forest Technician Jerry McNeil waves as he drives off in his new unit.



Forest technicians, supervisors, and mechanics listen to Caterpillar's Demo Operator Bob Sharpe and Equipment Coordinator Doug Mills go over features of the new dozer.



Charleston/Dorchester Forest Technician Robert Browning practices operating the new Cat dozer.



The new units are equipped with either lift plows or pull plows.



Georgetown Forest Technician Belton Musuck checks out on the new radio before leaving.



Georgetown Forest Technician Belton Musuck drives away from the agency HQ.

Programs

Natural Resource Management Students Learn About PLT

Environmental Education Coordinator Stephanie Kolok and Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel held a PreK-8 Project Learning Tree (PLT) workshop for the Natural Resource Management students at Central Carolina Technical College (CCTC) Feb. 16.

Students became certified in PLT and participated in activities such as “Birds and Worms,” “Living with Fire,” and “Every Tree for Itself.” CCTC Department Chair Josh Castleberry even participated with his students, acting as the “fire” in the game of “fire tag.”

Education

-Matt Schnabel



Environmental Education Coordinator Stephanie Kolok leads the Natural Resource Management students at Central Carolina Technical College in the Every Tree for Itself activity.



Students participate in the fire tag game with CCTC Department Chair Josh Castleberry (in red bandana), who acted as the fire.

Michele Ray Visits Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum

Taylor Nursery Administrative Assistant **Michele Ray** sent in this photo of a lumber scale (right) at Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum. This scale was used to measure boards sawn at the mill.

Michele and her husband visited the museum last summer and were fascinated by it. The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum contains a collection of photographs, papers, tools and other artifacts used on the railroad and at the mill. For more information, visit: <http://www.littleriverrailroad.org/>



Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum is located in Townsend, Tenn.



Lumber scale that was used to measure boards sawn.

March Designated Prescribed Fire Awareness Month

Governor's Proclamation Brings Attention to the Benefits of Controlled Burning

Gov. Nikki Haley has proclaimed March 2016 Prescribed Fire Awareness Month in South Carolina.

A coalition of state, federal and non-governmental land management organizations under the umbrella of the South Carolina Prescribed Fire Council requested the proclamation to raise awareness of the essential role that fire plays in both the stewardship of our natural resources and the protection of lives and property.

Prescribed, or controlled, burning is the skilled application of fire under planned weather and fuel conditions to achieve specific forest and land management objectives. Controlled burning is an ancient practice, notably used by Native Americans for crop management, insect and pest control, and hunting habitat improvement, among other purposes.

The practice continues today under the direction of land managers who understand the appropriate weather conditions, fuel loads and atmospheric conditions for conducting such burns. These carefully applied fires are an important tool to reduce wildfires, maintain wildlife habitat, and keep the more than 13 million acres of forested land in South Carolina healthy and productive.

While prescribed burning cannot stop all wildfires, it is the best management tool available for preventing larger and more frequent outbreaks. "Prescribed burning is not only the most effective, economical protection against wildfires because it reduces accumulated fuels," said Haley in her proclamation, "but it is also a key tool in managing and maintaining the ecological integrity of South Carolina's woodlands, grasslands, agricultural areas and wildlife habitats."

Darryl Jones, SCFC Forest Protection Chief, said about 500,000 acres are prescribed burned every year in South Carolina, but at least one million acres should be burned annually. "The benefits of prescribed burning are many and varied," said Jones. "Not only does it reduce the severity of wildfires, but it also improves wildlife habitat, increases recreation opportunities and protects the aesthetic value of our forestlands."



NEWS FROM Around the state

SCFA's Crawford Receives SCTPA President's Award

Congratulations to Forestry Association President & CEO Cam Crawford for receiving the SC Timber Producers Association's President's Award during SCTPA's Annual Membership Meeting in Myrtle Beach, SC. "SCTPA is proud to have the partnership with Cam Crawford and the Forestry Association to advance the Palmetto State's forest products industry," said Crad Jaynes, the group's president & CEO.

Michael Rushton, retired-Norbord South Carolina, Saluda, SC was also honored. He was lauded for being a proponent of sustainable forestry and a strong SCTPA supporter.

SCDNR Director Receives NWTF Award

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Director Alvin Taylor has dedicated his career to preserving our hunting heritage and conserving wildlife. The National Wild Turkey Federation recognized his distinguished career by presenting Taylor with the Lynn Boykin Hunting Heritage Award. Taylor accepted the award during the 40th annual NWTF Convention and Sport Show.

"Being recognized by an organization like the NWTF is a tremendous honor, not just for me but for everyone at the DNR," Taylor said. "It's another example of the long-term commitment this agency has with NWTF for the wild turkey and hunting and quality habitat for countless species."

The Lynn Boykin Hunting Heritage Award's namesake was a former president and chairperson of the NWTF's national board. During her tenure, she emphasized the importance of our hunting heritage and helped create a new outlook for

the organization. Today, the NWTF's mission to celebrate and preserve North America's hunting heritage is some of its most important work.

The NWTF determined this year's award winners based on how their work strengthens the organization's "Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt." initiative. Taylor and the SCDNR were early supporters and financial contributors to the Palmetto Shooting Complex at the NWTF, because Taylor understands that the recruitment of hunters is vitally important to wildlife conservation. The \$2 million Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration grant from the SCDNR made it possible for the facility to open this past October.

"Alvin truly deserves the Lynn Boykin Hunting Heritage Award," said George Thornton, NWTF CEO. "He and the SCDNR share our mission of preserving our hunting heritage and ensuring conservation efforts are based on sound science. I am proud to call him a friend and a strong supporter of the NWTF."



SC Department of Natural Resources Director Alvin Taylor with his NWTF award.

South Central Fire Compact Activated

Wade Dubea, Chair of the South Central Forest Fire Compact Member States activated the South Central Forest Fire Compact Feb. 19 and notified the Southeastern Forest Fire Compact Member States, South Central Forest Fire Compact Member States, and the Southern Group of State Foresters:

As Chair of the South Central Forest Fire Compact, I hereby activate the compact in response to elevated wildfire activity in Oklahoma. This action will allow for improved personnel and equipment resource movement among the involved states.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

NEWS FROM *Around the state*

SFI Receives Land Stewardship Award from National Wild Turkey Federation

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) presented the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) with its Land Stewardship Award during the 40th annual NWTF National Convention and Sport Show in Nashville, Tennessee on Saturday. SFI was chosen for its commitment to conservation, promoting responsible forest management for the benefit of the nation's forests and wildlife, and for partnering to support the NWTF's important work.

The NWTF created the Land Stewardship Award in 1994 to recognize organizations for excellence in land management, partnerships, and NWTF project support. The award also recognizes those who have done outstanding work to benefit natural resources through land stewardship.

"It is an absolute pleasure to receive the NWTF Land Stewardship Award. SFI, and the natural resource managers that use the SFI Standards, understand the importance of partnering to achieve our shared goals of habitat management and conservation. In fact, this award really goes to these managers who practice responsible forest management across the more than 280 million acres/110 million hectares of forestland certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard,"

said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc.

NWTF is a natural partner for SFI because of their tremendous track record of conservation achievements. In the eyes of many, restoration of the wild turkey population, led by the NWTF, is one of the greatest conservation success stories in the history of North American wildlife. From a low 1.5 million birds in 1973, today there are more than 7 million.

One of the ways SFI and NWTF are helping each other achieve mutually beneficial goals is the NWTF's work to promote the SFI Forest Partners® Program, which aims to increase certification, and connect the benefits of responsible forest management to stakeholders throughout the supply chain. This enhances sustainability and in turn enables current and future generations to enjoy America's forests for years to come. SFI and the NWTF also share a focus on promoting youth education in conservation through Boy Scouts of America and other leading outdoor youth education programs.

SFI is also pleased that the NWTF will use SFI-labeled materials for NWTF Turkey Transport Boxes and for NWTF publications such as Turkey Country and JAKES Country



Paul Trianosky, SFI's Chief Conservation Officer, accepts the Land Stewardship Award

magazines. SFI on-product labels are recognized globally and provide a visual cue to help customers source products from responsibly managed forests. For more information, visit: <http://www.sfiprogram.org/media-resources/news/sfi-receives-land-stewardship-award-from-national-wild-turkey-federation/>.

The SC Forestry Commission won the NWTF Land Stewardship Award in 2011 and had its State Forests certified to the SFI standard in 2013.

SC Exports Top \$30 Billion

Thanks to a loyal, highly-skilled workforce, the Palmetto State has earned a reputation for making top-quality products that have become hot commodities in all corners of the globe.

South Carolina's export sales totaled \$30.9 billion in 2015, setting a record for the sixth consecutive year. Fueling this international trade growth is the state's burgeoning aerospace industry sector. Last year, South Carolina enjoyed

a more than 176 percent increase in the export sales of aircraft. The Palmetto State also led the U.S. in the export of both completed passenger motor vehicles and tires in 2015, accounting for nearly 18 percent of the nation's automotive export market and more than 28 percent of its tire export market.

As South Carolina companies continue to manufacture first-class products, worldwide demand for those goods

will only increase, ensuring greater opportunities and prosperity for people in all corners of the state. For more information, visit <http://sccommerce.com/news/press-releases/south-carolina-export-sales-top-30-billion-2015-achieve-sixth-consecutive-record>.

Forest product exports have reached \$1.5 billion and are the number 1 exported commodity by volume from the Charleston Port.

Wireless Keyboard is Crafted Out of a Single Piece of Wood

The Orée keyboard is a real head turner. This wireless keyboard is crafted out of a single piece of wood, featuring a compact, stylish design that gives Apple's own Bluetooth keyboard a run for its money. Of course, if you're in the market for a new wireless keyboard, the Orée's hefty \$190 price alone might cause you to run back to cheaper options like Apple's \$99 wireless keyboard, but there's no denying the Orée is stunning.

The Orée comes in two types of wood, walnut or maple. The key caps are also

wooden - there's no faux-wood finish here - and even the power button is made out of wood. And, like a set of well-worn wooden stairs after many years, the Orée's keys could eventually take on the subtle grooves of your fingers over time, allowing for a truly unique keyboard with a familiar fit.

For more information, visit: <http://usa.oreeartisans.com/>.

From: www.businessinsider.com/oree-wireless-keyboard-is-crafted-out-of-a-single-piece-of-wood-2016-1?utm_source=WIT012916&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=WeekInTrees



This wireless keyboard is crafted out of a single piece of wood.

Are Crafty Australian Birds Resorting to Arson to Smoke Out Their Prey?

Humans may not be the only ones to blame for wildfires. Researchers have preliminary evidence pointing to Australian birds spreading fires in order to force out their prey from protected grassy areas.

The brown falcon and black kite are believed to pick up smoldering pieces of brush and branches, and transport them to new locations. These birds regularly hunt at the edges of fires, but such blazes are not always

positioned over food sources. By moving the fires to areas with a heavy concentration of prey, the birds create an easy opportunity to hunt frogs, lizards and snakes.

See www.heraldonline.com/news/article59743791.html.



The Parmesan You Sprinkle Could Be... Wood?

The cheese police are on the case. Acting on a tip, agents of the Food and Drug Administration paid a surprise visit to a cheese factory in rural Pennsylvania on a cold November day in 2012. They found what they were looking for: evidence that Castle Cheese Inc. was doctoring its 100 percent real Parmesan with cut-rate substitutes

and such fillers as wood pulp and distributing it to some of the country's biggest grocery chains.

German brewers protect their reputations with Reinheitsgebot, a series of purity laws first drawn up 500 years ago. Now the full force of the U.S. government has been brought to bear defending the authenticity of grated hard Italian cheeses.

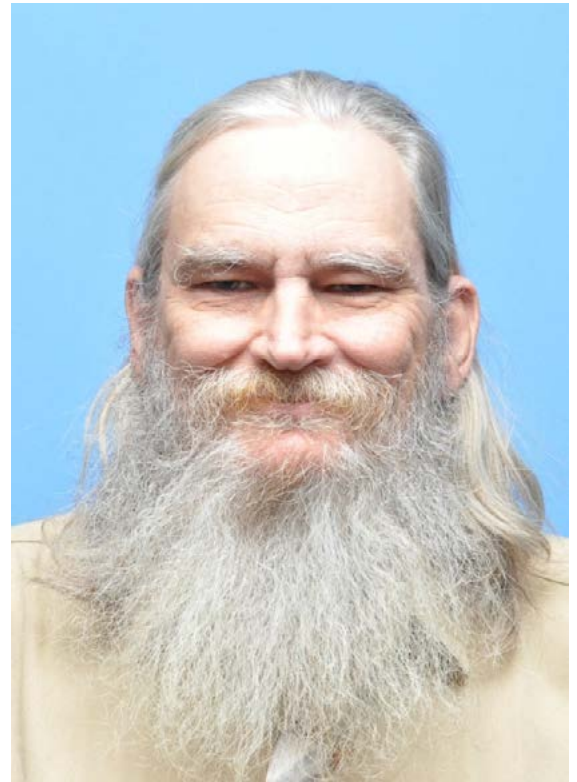
How serious is the problem? Bloomberg News had store-bought grated cheese tested for wood-pulp content by an independent laboratory. Cellulose is a safe additive, and an acceptable level is 2 percent to 4 percent, according to Dean Sommer, a cheese technologist at the Center for Dairy Research in Madison, Wisconsin.

Essential Everyday 100% Grated Parmesan Cheese, from Jewel-Osco, was 8.8 percent cellulose, while Wal-Mart Stores Inc.'s Great Value 100% Grated Parmesan Cheese registered 7.8 percent, according to test results. Whole Foods 365 brand didn't list cellulose as an ingredient on the label, but still tested at 0.3 percent. Kraft had 3.8 percent

According to the FDA's report on Castle, "no parmesan cheese was used to manufacture" the Market Pantry brand 100% grated Parmesan Cheese and Always Save Grated Parmesan Cheese and Best Choice 100% Grated Parmesan Cheese. Instead, there was a mixture of Swiss, mozzarella, white cheddar and cellulose, according to the FDA.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-parmesan-cheese-wood-scandal-20160216-story.html>





Technology has changed drastically over the years.

For someone like Coastal Communications Manager Mike Thomas, who has dealt with it on a daily basis for nearly four decades, the changes are even more apparent.

Thomas remembers not having a fax machine or a computer around when he began working for the Forestry Commission 36 years ago. He says the two most significant additions since then have been email and cellphones. What used to be a drawn out communication process between coworkers is now handled with a simple email or cellphone call.



Mike tests equipment on the Ruffin Fire in 2006.

"If you wanted to know something, you'd write it up in a memo and drop it in the mail," Thomas said. "If you really needed to know quickly, you'd pick up the microphone of the radio and select channel one from the district office, call Columbia and say 'is Columbia-2 9-7,' meaning is he available for a phone call. They'd say 'affirmative.' Then you'd pick up the phone and call. That way you didn't burn a long distance charge at 45 cents per minute to find out he wasn't in his office."

Growing up in Fairfax, S.C., Thomas couldn't make up his mind about what he wanted to be when he was older. Astronaut, fireman, farmer, fighter pilot and railroad engineer were just a few of the careers he fantasized about as a kid.

"It depended on what day of the week it was," Thomas quipped.

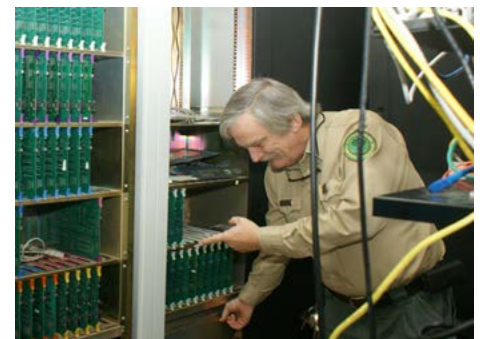
But by the time he went to college, his career path was a little clearer. He studied radio and TV repair at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College and worked at a radio and TV shop not long after that. When he realized that wasn't what he wanted to do, he decided to give broadcast engineering a try.

While working as a part-time engineer at 1580 WORG, Thomas sparked a friendship with JD Black, who went

to work in communications with the Forestry Commission a couple of years later. The friendship with Black eventually led Thomas to his current line of work. When Black left the Commission, he urged Thomas to apply for his position.

"I stopped by to see him one day, and he asked me if I had my license," Thomas recalled. "I told him I did, and he said, 'well let's go take you to the office and put in an application.' I told him I had an ad in with Ted Turner down in Atlanta. He said, 'that's a long way off, and you might want to be around here. It won't hurt to put in an application,' so I did. Five months later I got the job."

On top of his normal duties for the Forestry Commission, Thomas has



Mike Thomas in the Communications Room at the headquarters

also gone on countless trips out west to work on communications units during wildfires. He has been to multiple incidents in Washington, Montana and Texas, to name just a few states.

Thomas and his wife of 32 years, Margaret, live in Orangeburg and are very active in the Orangeburg Part-Time Players, a community theater group. He has performed in several shows, including the Hound of Baskervilles and Harvey. Thomas has also directed the Mystery of the Black Abbot, Angel Street, White Christmas and the Dixie Swim Club. The couple has one daughter, Deanna, 26, who works for the Lexington County school system.

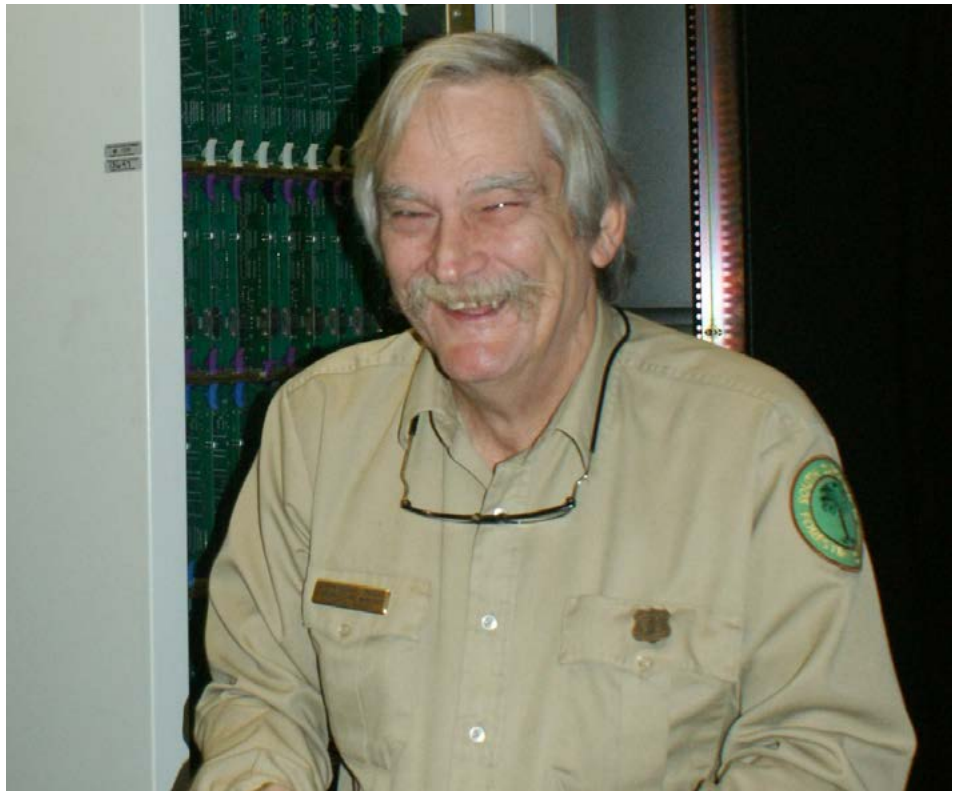
In his spare time, Thomas still does some broadcast engineering for 100.3 WORC. He enjoys collecting records and is fond of his Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd collection. He also has about a half-dozen Beatles records, including "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

"I bought that one for 75 cents when I was a kid. That cost me three weekends worth of going to the movies," Thomas said. "Because back then you could take a quarter and get in for a dime and have 15 cents left over for a popcorn and Coke."

Thomas is a big fan of Smokey Bear as well and has memorabilia ranging from old comic books to an ashtray with Smokey holding a shovel.



Mike straddles the state line Feb. 19 at the Corbin Mountain tower site.



Mike was thrilled to switch off the old Orbacom radio system in 2012.



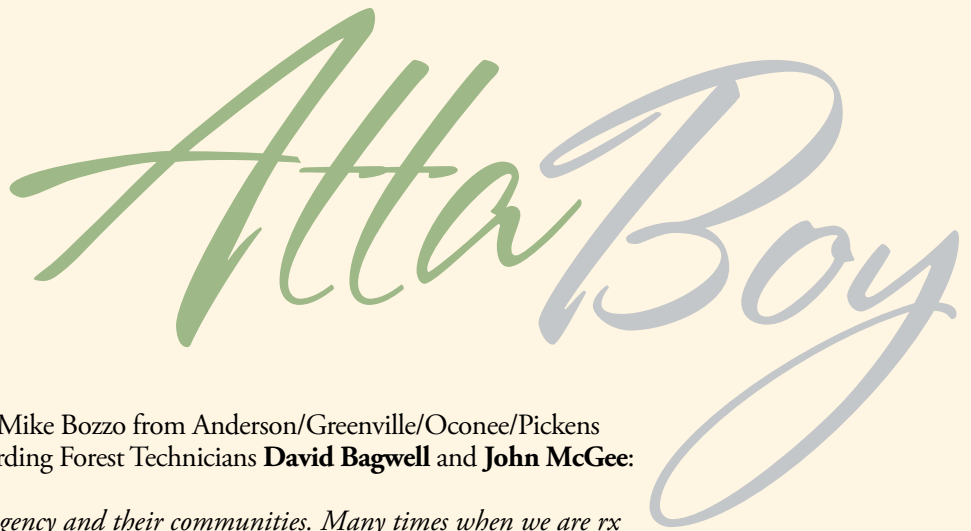
Mike stands on Dome Peak while working on the Spruce Dome Complex in the Wenatchee National Forest in 2001.



Mike's first western fire detail was the Train Creek Fire in Atlanta, Idaho in 2000.



Mike, back right, stands with the communications crew on the School Fire in Washington's Umatilla National Forest in 2005.



In an email to Piedmont Regional Forester Mike Bozzo from Anderson/Greenville/Oconee/Pickens Project Forester Trey Cox dated Feb. 17 regarding Forest Technicians **David Bagwell** and **John McGee**:

David and John do a great job for this agency and their communities. Many times when we are rx burning, one or the other of them are off duty.

Last week we were out late mopping up two nights in a row after burning in Iva. When we got home on the second night (Friday night) David was called out to a fire. I know how tired he must have been. The next morning he got up and helped me do a site prep burn in Pickens County.

Both David and John both are excellent employees in my estimation.

Trey Cox, Project Forester

In letters to Anderson/Oconee sector Forest Technicians **David Bagwell** and **John McGee** from Anderson/Greenville/Oconee/Pickens Project Forester Trey Cox dated Feb. 17 thanking them for their service:

I just wanted to commend you on the outstanding work you do for the SC Forestry Commission and the landowners of Anderson County. On a personal level, I want to say thank you for the attention to detail and thoroughness in conducting this year's seedling survival check. I was impressed with the timely manner in which you completed this task given the number of tracts you were presented with. Equally as impressive is the number of plots you installed on each of these tracts, ensuring a good confidence level for percent survival.

While I am at it, I would also like to thank you for the work you do regarding prescribed burning. This important service in Anderson County (and surrounding counties sometimes) would absolutely not get done without you. More importantly though, it would not get done without your attitude and willingness to put in the long hours and hard work it takes to accomplish the goals that I feel we have set together. I think you will agree, it is very rewarding to see some of the tracts we have burned in the past and the progress in many of these areas.

Lastly, thank you for responding at all hours to wildfires to protect lives, property and natural resources when called upon. Thank you also for the times when you are "on call" but not called to duty, resulting in your not always being able to do the things you might like to.

*Sincerely,
Your co-worker and friend,
Trey Cox, Project Forester*

ANDY ROONEY'S "THINGS I'VE LEARNED"

If you will take the time to read these. I promise you'll come away with an enlightened perspective. The subjects covered affect us all on a daily basis: They're written by the late Andy Rooney (60 Minutes), a man who had the gift of saying so much with so few words. Enjoy...

I've learned.... That a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.

I've learned.... That when your newly born grandchild holds your little finger in his little fist, that you're hooked for life.

I've learned.... That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it.

I've learned.... That the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

Human Resources

2016 Regional Screenings

Regional screenings are for retirees and employees who have missed or are unable to attend a screening held at their own workplace. Registration forms for these upcoming screenings will be posted online one month prior to the screening.

Date	City	County	Location	Address
March 17	Bluffton	Beaufort	Technical College of the Lowcountry (New River Campus)	100 Community College Drive, Room 117
April 13-14	Columbia			
May 18	Spartanburg			
June 9	Greenville			
July 7	Florence			
July 15	Conway			
July 21	Charleston			

Human Resources

- Lynn Rivers

As soon as we have location information for these screenings, we will pass it along. Please contact Allison Talbot, Benefits Administrator, with questions or for assistance (803) 896-7059.

The Bottom Line: A Colonoscopy at No Charge

Your health can profit from having a colonoscopy. If you're a State Health Plan primary member beginning at age 50, you can now get both routine and diagnostic colonoscopies at no charge at a participating network provider. For those younger than age 50, you can get a diagnostic colonoscopy ordered by your network provider at no charge.

This means no copay and no requirement that you must first meet a deductible. Your plan will pay 100 percent of the cost, including the consultation, the generic prep kit, the procedure and anesthesia at a network provider.

The bottom line? A colonoscopy is an investment in your health. It can save your life by detecting pre-cancerous conditions early. With cost no longer an issue, don't risk postponing your doctor-recommended colonoscopy.

For details about this benefit and other PEBA Perks, visit www.PEBAperks.com.

Dental Plus Network Changes Coming March 1

The provider network for the Dental Plus plan offered through the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) and insured by BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina will change effective March 1, 2016. PEBA's current Dental Plus provider network will convert to Blue Cross' network March 1.

Blue Cross' network is larger than the current Dental Plus network and Blue Cross is actively recruiting dental care providers who participate only in PEBA's Dental Plus network.

If you have questions about the Dental Plus network, contact BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina at (888) 214-6230.

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS

JOB TITLE: - READVERTISEMENT - Forester I

CLOSING DATE: Continuous

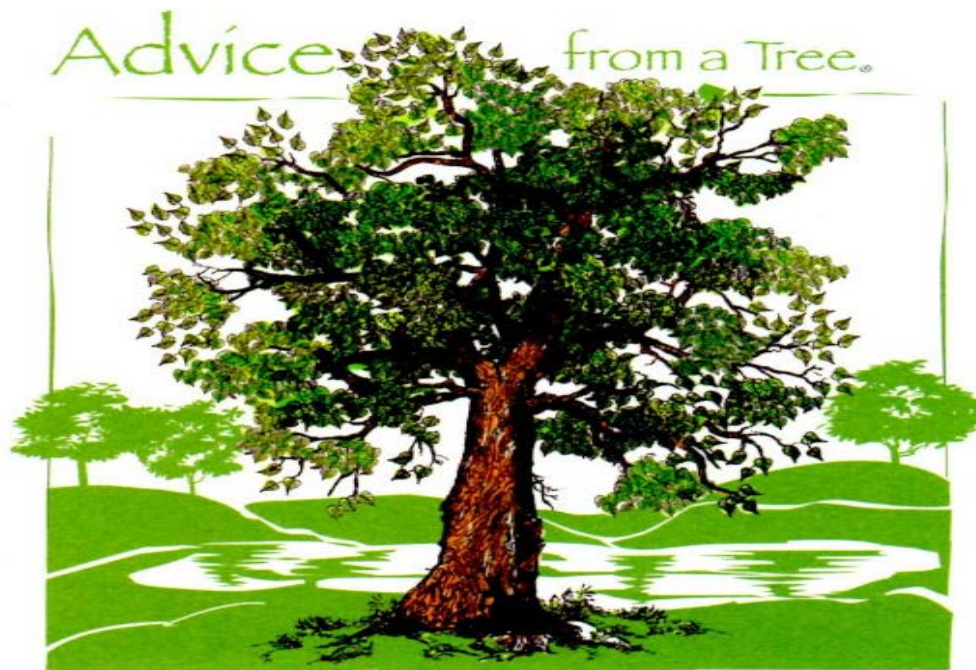
AGENCY HIRING RANGE - MIN: \$32,787.00

LOCATION: Marion County

AGENCY HIRING RANGE - MAX: \$34,427.00

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES: THIS IS A RE-ADVERTISEMENT. PREVIOUS APPLICANTS NEED NOT RE-APPLY. YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS POSTING. Recommends and promotes sound forestry management practices to landowners to include examination of woodland and preparation of complete forest management plans. Assists landowners in implementing recommendations. Conducts prescribed burns; responds to wildland fires; performs forest fire suppression duties; marks and estimates volume on any stand of timber requested. Provides technical assistance in specialized areas of forestry to include best management practices, urban forestry and conducting insect/disease surveys. Provides information to the public regarding state forests and forestry services.

MINIMUM AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: A bachelor's degree in forestry from a college or university accredited by the Society of American Foresters. Current SC Registered Forester or eligible within two (2) years. Must pass a physical fitness test of walking two (2) miles in thirty (30) minutes carry a 25 lb. pack. Must obtain firefighter registration with the South Carolina State Fire Marshal's Office. A criminal background check is a condition of employment.



Stand up tall and proud
Sink your roots into the earth
Be content with your natural beauty
Go out on a limb
Drink plenty of water
Remember your roots
Enjoy the view!

Fire Weather Outlook

March

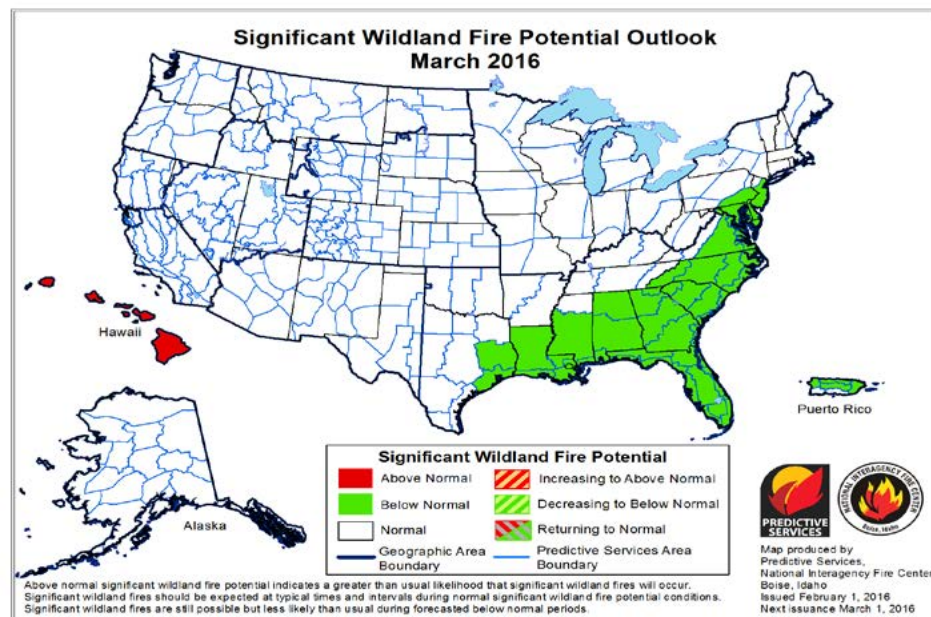
- Below normal significant fire potential will continue across most of the Southeastern U.S., mid-Atlantic and Puerto Rico as El Nino continues to bring significant moisture.
- Significant fire potential will be normal across the remainder of the U.S., though potential for pre-greenup fire activity increases through early spring.

April through May

- Above normal significant fire potential will develop across the Great Lakes into the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys where less precipitation has occurred.
- Below normal significant fire potential will continue across most of the Southeastern and Puerto Rico.
- Significant fire potential continues normal across the rest of the U.S.

Southern Area: Below normal significant wildland fire potential is expected for most of the Southern Area during February and March. Below normal significant fire potential will continue into April and May across the Gulf and Atlantic coasts while interior portions of the Area will transition to above normal significant wildland fire potential.

Drought is almost completely absent in the Southern Area. Moist systems continue to provide robust moisture and snow events. Expect precipitation events at a broader and higher frequency to continue to limit significant fire risk. However, a switch to a colder-than-normal temperature pattern will be in store from February and March



with an overall trend to lower-than-normal precipitation for the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys through the rest of the outlook period. A drier pattern that has setup across Oklahoma and Texas is the exception.

Fuel moistures continue to trend above critical thresholds with fine fuels quickly drying in response to drops in humidity from arctic systems. This situation will be most evident in Texas where short periods of low humidity combine with winds and warm temperatures to elevate initial attack potential. Fire activity so far this year remains very low for both total fires and acres. With the drier trend in West Texas, expect periods of enhanced ignition potential where cured fine fuels, in combination with wind and low humidity,

will produce seasonally typical, short duration periods of elevated fire potential. However, this is not expected to be the predominant pattern. Western portions of the Southern Area will be the focus of any fire potential over the next couple of months.

Pre-greenup period outlooks suggest a drier spring and could be an indicator for an accumulating dryness in the fine to moderate fuels leading up to leaf out. For this reason, and based upon the precipitation outlook, continue to expect the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys to have concern for fire potential. Until then, though, no significant fire potential concerns exist as winter conditions continue.

CURRENT FIRE NUMBERS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

Month and Year-To-Date Comparison To Previous 5- And 10-Year Average

Time Period	FEB		JULY-FEB		FISCAL YEAR	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
5 Year Average	349	2,378.1	1,226	6,207.6	2,067	13,127.2
10 Year Average	353	2,352.3	1,277	6,209.1	2,365	15,971.2
Current FY ¹	79	542.9	412	2,202.7	412	2,202.7

¹To date for current fiscal year (does not include fires listed above)

TREE SONG

*This love of mine has no beginning, it has no end
I was an oak now I'm a willow and I can bend
And tho' I'll never in my life see you again
Here I stay until it's time for you to go*

Song: "Until It's Time for You to Go"

Artist: Elvis Presley

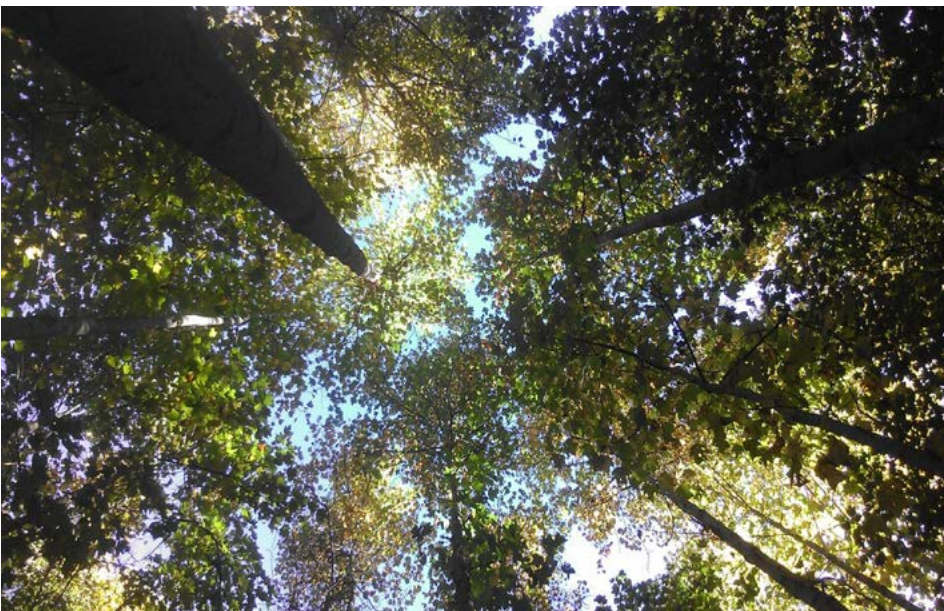
Album: Elvis Now (1972)

Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hofaGDL39eQ>

Thanks to Firewise Field Coordinator Bill Wiley for sending in this song!

Can you think of a song with
tree- or forestry-related lyrics?
Let us know, and we'll share it
with everyone.

Photo of the Month



State Forester Gene Kodama sent in this photo looking up at the canopy of yellow poplars on Chimney Top Mountain while on a bear hunt in Pickens County. He did not see any bears, but greatly enjoyed the daybreak scenery and solitude.

WATERGEDDEON



Property & Construction Manager David Owen can only laugh at all the issues he had to deal with during the week of Feb. 8. The water was out for a majority of the week due to breaks in the line on our side and then on the city's side.

Quote of the Month

*In all things of nature
there is something of the
marvelous.*

Aristotle

Please send in your
photos or news to
Michelle Johnson at
mjohnson@scfc.gov.